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State Transport, Madras

* 58 Q.—SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Will the Hon the Minister for Industries be pleased to state—

(*a*) the net profit earned by the State Transport, Madras, during the years 1957–58, 1958–59 and 1959–60; and

(*b*) the proportion of the profit in each of the above years utilized for the increase of fleet strength or replacement of unserviceable vehicles?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : (*a*) 1957–58—Rs. 20·30 lakhs, 1958–59—Rs. 20·50 lakhs, and 1959–60—Rs. 26·10 lakhs.

(*b*) The expenditure towards the purchase of buses for augmentation or replacement is met from the general revenues of the State with which the profits are merged.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : May I know, Sir, how the profits are invested? Are they invested separately or do they merge into the general revenues?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : They merge into the general revenues.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Sir, is the Hon. Minister aware that there is going to be a Development Fund and that whatever amount is required for the purchase of buses in future will be met out of the Development Fund? Will he clarify what is the amount of the Development Fund and how is it going to be utilized?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : It is now proposed to start a Development Fund with an initial contribution of Rs. 22·5 lakhs. This really comes to us as accumulated interest which the reserves of the State Transport Department bear with the Government. We are starting this Development Fund with Rs. 22·5 lakhs, and we propose to transfer to this fund one-third of the net profits every year so that we can expand our bus services.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Sir, since the transport system is making profits, is there a proposal to give bonus to the technical staff, conductors and drivers?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : They are already getting bonus. It is on the basis of production. We have fixed some norms for technical staff. If they perform more than the norms, then we give bonus. With regard to conductors and drivers, bonus is given on the basis of their record. We have got a new scheme now under which for perfect attendance and work, we will give bonus.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Sir, is it because of allowing standing passengers that there is such a profit? If standing passengers are not allowed, then will the profits go down?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : It is a matter for speculation.

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SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Sir, from the time the Government nationalized the bus transport in the City of Madras, there was a depreciation fund. Will the Minister tell us how much went into the depreciation fund, and what is the balance left now?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : I think we have got about Rs. 172 lakhs in the depreciation fund.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : May I know as to how that amount, if it is with the Government, is going to be utilized?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : It is all part of the ways and means of the State Government.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Sir, are the routes to Kancheepuram and Tirupathi economic or uneconomic?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : The bus routes to Tirupathi are not only economic, but very profitable also. As regards the bus routes to Kancheepuram, we have not taken over the whole thing. We are running two or three buses. Private competition is very keen.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Since a number of bus routes in the City of Madras are uneconomic according to the statement given by the State Transport Department itself, do the Government propose to withdraw buses from those uneconomic routes as a sort of necessity?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Not at all. It is not the idea of the Government to withdraw from any of those uneconomic routes. On the other hand, we want to serve every part of the city.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Sir, as the Leader of the House has said that Rs. 20 lakhs has been earmarked for the Development Fund, am I to understand that the purchase of all the additional buses in future will be dependent on the new Development Fund or on the necessity for them in the City of Madras?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : The expansion of the fleet will be dependent purely on the needs, and if we can devote a part of the Development Fund to that purpose, we will do it. Even if the Development Fund is not enough, we can borrow from the State resources and expand it.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Can the Minister tell us whether the present fleet strength, particularly the number of buses on the road, are commensurate with the heavy traffic in the City of Madras?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Sir, I think that Madras is growing faster than even the expert's contemplation. The expert of the I.L.O., a copy of whose recommendation is placed on the table of the House to-day, anticipated that 475 buses would

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be enough for the routes which we now have. But we have 570 buses and still they are not able to cope with the increased traffic that is now offering.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Sir, what steps the Government propose to take to meet the increased demand and also to serve every part of the city?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : We are going to have an additional fleet of 150 buses in the next year.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Sir, is the Leader of the House aware that while the expert's opinion has got its own value, in this matter of transport, the lakhs of people who suffer in the City of Madras are the experts to give the opinion whether the number of buses in the City of Madras is sufficient or not?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : The point really is that the growth of the City of Madras is much faster than even the contemplation of the experts. That is the point, and particularly in the wake of a number of industries which have been started in and around Madras, the bus travelling public also have increased beyond normal expansion.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Sir, the Leader of the House was very happy in saying that the fleet strength in Madras was 570. But is he aware that one-third of the buses are not on the road? If my figure is not correct, he can give the correct figure.

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : The figure quoted by the hon. Member is not correct. It was so when we had a large number of old buses. By the year 1959-60 we had eliminated all old buses. Actually the report says that we had only 34 old buses—overaged buses—at the end of the year 1959-60. To-day all the buses are within the book life. The ratio is that 80 per cent of the buses are on the road. It is only 20 per cent that is idle, and that is necessary, because of the very rules we have framed.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : May I know, Sir, how many old buses, which are classified as unproductive, are used to give lift to the conductors and drivers of the transport system?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Sir, I did not follow the question.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Sir, some buses do not ply. They are declared unfit. Those buses are employed for bringing in drivers and conductors. May I know the number of such buses?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : That is what we call 'dead milage', that is, milage which we use for purposes other than carrying passengers. We have to give transport to some of our workers to go to the transport depot in the early hours of the morning and then to go home after the usual transport hours. We are using these old buses—that is, overaged buses—for this purpose. I cannot give the exact number now.